

# UPDATED Disruption to supply of multiple intravenous fluid bags


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## SAFETY NOTICE 002/25

Issue date:	29 January 2025
Replaces	SA:015/24
Content reviewed by:	System Sustainability and Performance, Medication Shortage Assessment and Management Team, Infection Prevention and Control, Emergency Care Institute and other relevant clinical experts.
Distributed to:	Chief Executives; Directors of Clinical Governance; Director, Regulation and Compliance Unit
KEY MESSAGE:	NSW Health facilities and clinicians are aware of the ongoing disruption to supply of multiple intravenous fluid bags, and recommendations to conserve supply, and ongoing requirement for local Intravenous Fluid Stewardship (IVFS) groups.
ACTION REQUIRED BY:	Chief Executives, Directors of Clinical Governance
REQUIRED ACTION:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Distribute this Safety Notice (and/or related factsheets) to all relevant clinicians and clinical departments where intravenous fluids are held, prescribed, and/or administered, and include this information in relevant handovers and safety huddles.</li> <li>2. Undertake a local risk assessment and incorporate the below recommendations to manage the disruption of supply of intravenous fluids.</li> <li>3. Ensure a system is in place to document actions taken in response to this Safety Notice.</li> <li>4. Escalate any <b>concerns regarding supply</b> to HealthShare NSW via email <a href="mailto:HSNSW-PSC-communications@health.nsw.gov.au">HSNSW-PSC-communications@health.nsw.gov.au</a> or for after-hours escalation, phone 02 8893 1186.</li> <li>5. Escalate any <b>clinical concerns</b> to <a href="mailto:CEC-MedicationSafety@health.nsw.gov.au">CEC-MedicationSafety@health.nsw.gov.au</a>.</li> <li>6. Confirm receipt of this updated Safety Alert within <b>72 hours</b> to: <a href="mailto:CEC-MedicationSafety@health.nsw.gov.au">CEC-MedicationSafety@health.nsw.gov.au</a>.</li> </ol>
DEADLINE:	COB 1 February 2025
We recommend you also inform:	Directors, Managers and Staff of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All clinical areas</li> <li>• Pharmacy</li> <li>• Nursing/Midwifery</li> <li>• Medical Services</li> <li>• Drug and Therapeutics Committees</li> </ul> Clinical Product Managers Infection Prevention and Control Other relevant clinicians, departments and committees.
Website:	<a href="https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/sabs/Pages/default.aspx">https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/sabs/Pages/default.aspx</a> <a href="http://internal.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/sabs/index.html">http://internal.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/sabs/index.html</a>
Review date:	January 2026

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## What is updated in the Safety Notice from the SA: 015/24?

This Safety Notice replaces SA:015/24 – *UPDATED Critical disruption to the supply of multiple intravenous fluid bags*, which has now been rescinded. Key changes include:

- Removal of mandatory QARS audit requirements.
- Updated information surrounding weekly stock allocations to align with current process.

## Situation

There is an ongoing disruption to supply (with intermittent stock available) of IV fluid bags due to manufacturing issues and increases in demand. The date of return to normal supply is being closely monitored by HealthShare NSW, the Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC) and the Ministry of Health.

The primary products affected include:

- Hartmann's solution bags (Baxter, B. Braun and Fresenius Kabi) – all volumes.
- Sodium chloride 0.9% bags (Baxter, B. Braun and Fresenius Kabi) – all volumes.

Supply of alternative crystalloid solutions (such as Plasma-Lyte 148 and Ionolyte) are **not** expected to fulfill the shortfall in supply of Hartmann's solution.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has approved the use of international alternatives under Section 19A (S19A) of the *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989*, however supply may still be limited. Refer to the [TGA shortage information](#) page and CEC factsheet [Information for NSW Health clinicians – Clinical recommendations for managing intravenous \(IV\) fluids shortage](#) for further information. HealthShare NSW has negotiated with suppliers for a bulk order of these products for use across all NSW Health Facilities. Individual facilities are **not** to place separate orders for S19A products.

## Background

IV fluid bags are used to manage or correct deficiencies in hydration and electrolyte imbalance. They are also used as diluents for compatible IV medicines.

## Assessment

If the preferred IV fluid bag (diluent and/or volume) is not available, alternative products or methods of administration will need to be used considering clinical safety, appropriateness and compatibility.

To assist with the management of the disruption to supply, information has been provided in the following factsheets:

- Factsheet: [Information for NSW Health clinicians – Clinical recommendations for managing intravenous \(IV\) fluids shortage](#).
  - Provides clinical conservation strategies that must be implemented in all NSW Health facilities where clinically safe to do so.
- Factsheet: [Information for NSW Health Services – Intravenous Fluids Stewardship](#).
  - Provides information regarding establishment of an Intravenous Fluids Stewardship (IVFS) group (mandatory for each facility or group of facilities) to ensure conservation strategies are in place and there is clinically appropriate distribution of IV fluids across all NSW Health facilities.

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- IV Fluid Stewardship Groups are to continue to meet on a regular basis (at least monthly) according to the needs of each organisation.
- Factsheet: [Information for NSW Health clinicians – Intravenous \(IV\) fluid bags – International alternatives and associated safety considerations.](#)
  - Provides information reading S19A alternatives which are **not registered** for use in Australia and the important safety issues that must be reviewed prior to use.
  - **Note:** a number of posters are also available for display in clinical areas, outlining important considerations associated with the use of the Section 19 alternatives. They can be accessed [here](#).
- Factsheet: [Information for NSW Health clinicians – Risk of air embolism when administering intravenous fluids without in-line air detection.](#)
  - Provides information regarding the risk of air embolism due to the flexible container presentation for many of the S19A alternatives.
- Factsheet: [Information for clinicians caring for maternity patients – Intravenous fluids and oxytocin infusion.](#)
  - Provides additional information for NSW maternity services to support conservation strategies and ensure the continuation of essential care.
- Factsheet: [Information for NSW Health clinicians – Conservation strategies for sodium chloride 0.9% 250 mL IV fluid bags](#)
  - Provides information regarding strategies to specially conserve sodium chloride 0.9% 250 mL IV fluid bags as this formulation has been impacted by recalls.

The content within the above factsheets is subject to change as further information becomes available and the supply situation evolves. Refer to the **electronic** versions of these factsheets using the above hyperlinks (also accessible via the [CEC Medication Safety Updates webpage](#)), as printed versions are uncontrolled.

## Recommendations

### Auditing:

- State level audits will no longer be undertaken.
- Facilities are encouraged to regularly audit IV fluid use and stock on hand locally to assist the IVFS group with oversight. These audits will need to be set up and managed at a local level **either** via:
  - DeliverEASE
    - Use DeliverEASE Cycle Counting to record stock on hand levels at each location within each hospital.
    - Review the Inventory Visibility Dashboard for stock usage information.
    - For any support using DeliverEASE Cycle Counting and Inventory Visibility Dashboard contact HealthShare at [HSNSW-PSC-Support-Development-Delivery@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:HSNSW-PSC-Support-Development-Delivery@health.nsw.gov.au)
  - QARS
    - QARS administrators can copy and modify questionnaire ID 14714 (NSW IV Fluid Audit) for use locally.
    - Refer to the [QARS User Manual](#) or contact [CEC-DatabaseHelpdesk@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:CEC-DatabaseHelpdesk@health.nsw.gov.au) for further information.

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## *Inventory control strategies:*

- When assessing IV fluid bag stock holdings, consider the following:
  - Identify all locations where IV fluids are stored and ensure mechanisms are in place to share stock both within and between facilities in your district/network.
  - Prioritise supply of Australian registered IV fluids for use with pressure devices and supply of the S19A alternatives in clinical areas where infusion via pressure is not required.
  - Reduce quantities held in imprest areas throughout the disruption to supply.
  - Prioritise supply of IV fluids to clinical areas with clinically appropriate high usage requirements and critical needs. For example, conserve sodium chloride 0.9% 100 mL for the administration of vasopressors/inotropes in critical care settings.
  - Be aware of locations where specific volumes of fluid are required (e.g. sodium chloride 0.9% 500 mL required to prime and flush transducers).
  - Ensure supply of IV fluid is appropriately rotated to minimise potential wastage of stock due to expiry. Any facility with supply of expiring IV fluids (expiring within 28 days) must escalate to [CEC-MedicationSafety@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:CEC-MedicationSafety@health.nsw.gov.au).

## *Stock ordering/distribution:*

- Facilities are directed **not** to place orders for centrally managed sodium chloride 0.9% and Hartmann's product lines with suppliers/wholesalers (this applies to both Australian registered and S19A supply).
- All facilities are required to hold **2 weeks** (if available) of stock on hand across the centralised product lines:
  - Sodium chloride 0.9% 50 mL, 100 mL, 250 mL, 500 mL and 1000 mL bags
  - Hartmann's 500 mL and 1000 mL bags.
- Centralised IV fluid supply for these product lines will continue through OneLink Warehouse (OLW) until further notice.
- Existing processes surrounding approval/rejection and communication of weekly allocations will continue through the HealthShare HSCPM Critical Supply Microsoft Teams Channel. Relevant staff can access further information and resources on this channel including cut-off times to 'allocate/reject' upcoming allocations.